

Have

a safe

Readiness Center Airmen pause to reflect on safety, well-being

By Air Force Master Sgt. Mike R. Smith
NATIONAL GUARD BUREAU

Airmen from the Air National Guard Readiness Center (ANGRC) participated in the Air Force-wide "Wingman Stand-Down" by reflecting on safety and being good wingmen.

A group of about 1,000 Airmen from the ANGRG gathered June 9 at the theater on Joint Base Andrews, Md., to hear leaders talk about safety and the wingman concept.

"In order to accomplish our mission effectively, each of us has to be a wingman, leader and a warrior," said Air Force Lt. Gen. Harry Wyatt III, director of the Air Guard. "We all have personal stories illustrating the wingman concept, when either we have helped someone overcome a problem or they have helped us in a time of need."

The wingman concept can be as simple as being aware of risky behavior and looking out for fellow Airman to prevent injury, accidents and death, said officials.

Wyatt said the Air Guard lost seven Airmen to suicide this year and another 10 were killed in automobile, motorcycle, recreational and other ground mishaps.

"These numbers are alarming, and should serve as a wake-up call for all of us," he said.

Wyatt called motor vehicle and motorcycle accidents preventable with good judgment.

"At least 70 percent of those accidents involve reckless behavior, such as speeding, distracted driving involving cell phones or text messaging, drinking and driving and failure to wear personal protective equipment, including seat belts and helmets," he said.

Wyatt also noted that the purpose of the stand-down was to reenergize the wingman concept as a foundation to suicide prevention.

"The chief of staff's guidance for stand-down 2010 emphasizes awareness, accountability, team building, communication and interaction – not one-sided lectures," said Wyatt. "I encourage you to develop activities that enhance awareness of these issues and promote communication and development of the wingman concept."

Air Force Col. Michael McDonald, the ANGRG commander, and Col. John Slocum, the Air Guard's safety director, also spoke.

"We need to take care of each other," said McDonald. "If you don't like the term 'wingman,' then think of a brother-in-arms, or a best friend, or a buddy, or a partner; whatever you want to call it, the concept is there, and it means we are going to take care of each other."

Army Guard urges commanders to 'make a difference'

By Air Force Master Sgt. Greg Rudl
NATIONAL GUARD BUREAU

The Army Guard experienced an increase in non-duty, or off-duty, fatalities during last year's "Critical Days of Summer," said John L. Cicilese, a safety & occupational health specialist at the Army Guard Readiness Center.

He said that the Army Guard suffered 37 off-duty fatalities in 2009:

Of the nine personal injury-type accidents, two drowned, two died from electrocution, one from a lightning strike, one in a house fire, one fell in a cave, one died from an accidental shooting, and one died from a hit and run.

Of the 28 vehicle fatalities, 12 died in a car or truck, 15 on a motorcycle and one on an ATV. The common causes for all POV fatalities were loss of control, excessive speed and struck by another driver.

In 2008, the ARNG had 32 off-duty fatalities:

Of the four were personal injury-type accidents, three drowned while swimming and one was an accidental shooting.

Of the 28 vehicle fatalities, 11 died in a car or truck and 17 on a motorcycle.

The common causes for all POV fatalities were excessive speed, failure to stay attentive and loss of control, he said.

Cicilese said that despite the increase, he believes the states are getting the message out to Soldiers to be safe all year round and especially during the summer.

"NGB [National Guard Bureau] encourages all commanders to get involved with their Soldiers and to make a difference," he said. His office has been receiving more requests than normal for motorcycle training, as well as a greater awareness of the hazards

e summer

Keep in mind this summer...

Now that warmer weather is here, keep the following points in mind while planning your activities:

👉 Risk management is a tool to assist us in fighting these summer hazards. It can be done on the fly, anywhere, anytime, by anyone. Simply ask yourself: What am I doing? What can go wrong? Could I hurt myself or others? What actions can I take to reduce or eliminate danger?

👉 Be a good battle buddy/wingman. This involves

watching each others' backs to prevent injury or loss of life. A good wingman will recognize risky behavior and have the courage to speak up.

👉 Make safety a habit. Wear seatbelts in cars and required protective equipment on motorcycles. Remain alert while at the wheel and plan rest breaks at frequent intervals. Don't speed - it is better to arrive late than not arrive at all. Don't drink and drive. Anticipate the unexpected and be ready to react.

-Courtesy of the 129th Rescue Wing, California National Guard

